

H.R. 3144 - Protects the Snake River dams



HR 3144 legislation:

- Offers a creative solution that is good for both listed salmon and the economy of the Northwest and Benton County.
- Provides relief in the endless litigation of federal hydro system operations by directing the federal agencies to implement the current federal salmon plan, known as the 2014 Supplemental BiOp.
- Provides time for the federal agencies to complete the court-ordered NEPA environmental review process analyzing federal hydro system operations and focuses the general agencies limited resources on getting that process right.
- Avoids experiments or spill tests at the eight Columbia and Snake dams, and studies modifications at the dams that restrict electrical generation which would create uncertainties in BPA's power costs and supply and raise Northwest electric customers' rates.

Federal legislation H.R. 3144 has been proposed to protect the Snake River dams by affirming the current operations under the existing Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS) Biological Opinion (BiOp).

H.R. 3144 was introduced on a bipartisan basis by Representatives Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA), Dan Newhouse (R-WA), Jaime Herrera Beutler (R-WA), Kurt Schrader (D-OR) and Greg Walden (R-OR).

The legislation requires the federal agencies responsible for the management of the FCRPS (Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), Army Corps of Engineers, and the Bureau of Reclamation) to operate the hydro system in compliance with the 2014 Supplemental BiOp until 2022 or until the court-ordered comprehensive National Environmental Policy Act process concludes, a new BiOp is in place, and judicial review is complete. It also would continue, as appropriate, the implementation of the plan's measures to protect and restore salmon.

Despite the success of the current FCRPS BiOp, the United States District Court for the District of Oregon, rejected the plan and ruled all options need to be reviewed including breaching or removing one or more of the four Snake River dams.

The bill provides relief in the endless litigation of federal hydro system operations by directing the federal agencies to implement the current BiOp that has been vetted and supported by previous presidential administration's top scientists and resulted in wild salmon numbers trending significantly upward due to changes in operations and the installation of new passage technologies.

Benton PUD and other utilities across the state have passed resolutions in support of H.R. 3144.



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